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**THE SOVIET OPERATIONAL-LEVEL COMMANDER:  
ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN THE  
CONDUCT OF OPERATIONAL ART**

A Monograph

by

**Major James P. Mault  
Adjutant General Corps**



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**School of Advanced Military Studies  
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Reforms and reorganizations of the Soviet ground forces over the past 10-15 years have opened the door for younger officers to take command of the Military Districts (MD), Groups of Forces (GOF), and Theaters (TVD). These officers come mainly from one of three backgrounds: Group of Soviet Forces, Germany; Afghanistan; or the Far East (where they had formerly worked with General Yazov).

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This situation reveals some possible areas where vulnerabilities exist in the make-up of the current MD/GOF and TVD commanders. The biographic methodology can serve as a tool for evaluating other commanders in the future.

The Soviet Operational-level Commander:  
Assessing the Role of Personality in the Conduct of  
Operational Art

by

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U.S. Army Command and General Staff College  
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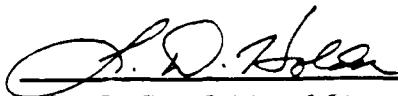
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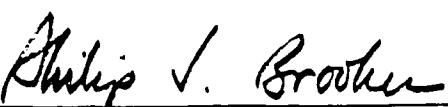
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## ABSTRACT

THE SOVIET OPERATIONAL-LEVEL COMMANDER: ASSESSING THE  
ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN THE CONDUCT OF OPERATIONAL ART by  
Major James P. Mault, USA. 61 pages.

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The purpose of this monograph is to evaluate the leadership traits, professional skills, and abilities of these commanders by analyzing their careers, their education, and their published works. Their performance will be measured against that of three Soviet marshals during World War II and a list of attributes associated with history's successful operational commanders.

Marshals Zhukov, Rokossovskiy, and Konev had similar attributes. Each possessed vision and keen knowledge of the enemy. And each successfully orchestrated the employment of his combined arms assets while still taking account of the moral dimension of war. Yet despite these similarities, the three had different procedures for command and control of their fronts.

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## INTRODUCTION.

In Generalship: Its Diseases and their Cure, J. F. C. Fuller quoted Napoleon on the role of the commander's personality:

The personality of the general is indispensable, he is the head, he is the all, of an army. The Gauls were not conquered by the Roman legions, but by Caesar. It was not before the Carthaginian soldiers that Rome was made to tremble, but before Hannibal. It was not the Macedonian phalanx which penetrated to India, but Alexander.<sup>1</sup>

In military schools and staff colleges, we study past senior commanders and the conduct of their campaigns. We analyze their performance, attempt to capture the applicable lessons, and, hopefully, adapt them to the current situation, so that we, too, can become masters of our trade. But in battle, as noted by Carl von Clausewitz in his treatise On War, there is also a living, thinking, acting commander leading the opposing forces to counter your every move, thus making war as much a clash of wills and intellects as a clash of arms and armies.

For this reason, FM 100-5, Operations, states operational intelligence must attempt to probe the mind of the enemy commander. It must see the theater through his eyes, visualize which courses of action are open to him, and estimate which he is most likely to adopt.<sup>2</sup>

We place great emphasis on the ability to "get into the head" of the opposing commander, to learn how he thinks, to uncover his traits, his foibles, his idiosyncrasies. FM 100-5 adds that in developing a

campaign,

operational commanders [should] take into account the enemy's doctrine and patterns of large unit operations, the personalities and idiosyncrasies of his senior commanders.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly in "Catching Up With Operational Art," COL L. D. Holder wrote that

personalities, strengths, weaknesses and operational styles of leaders . . . influence the course of operations markedly and take on great importance in operational planning.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the recognized importance of understanding the enemy commander, we still know very little about those who command Soviet Theaters (TVDs), Groups of Forces (GOF), and Military Districts (MD). Although events such as the KAL shootdown, the flight of Matthias Rust, and the selling of glasnost' have brought Marshal Ogarkov and General Yazov to the public eye, the vast majority of Soviet operational commanders are still mere names with enigmatic backgrounds.

Who are today's Soviet front and TVD commanders? Are they clones of their predecessors in the Great Partiotic War? Are they as capable as were Marshals Zhukov, Konev, and Rokossvoskiy? Are they all masters of Soviet operational art? Or are they merely favored members of selected military cliques?

To establish the command styles of the above-named marshals from World War II is relatively easy. We have memoirs, personal observations, and historical accounts

which can provide us with volumes of data to analyze. Similarly, we have works of classical and modern military theory, as well as the campaigns of other great captains, against which we can measure and evaluate the performance of selected Soviet marshals. This will give us an indication of their leadership styles and what it took in the Great Patriotic War to be a successful Soviet operational commander. Although the results are not completely applicable to today's commanders, they do offer us a frame of reference within which to study.

In this monograph, I intend to establish this frame of reference by reviewing the careers and analyzing the personal traits of Marshals Zhukov, Rokossovskiy, and Konev. Next I will look at five Soviet operational commanders of the 1980s (and in some cases the early 1990s as well) in order to uncover their collective and individual attributes and command styles. They are: Generals Zaytsev (former CINC Southern TVD); Suetkov (CINC Group of Soviet Forces, Germany [GSFG]); Postnikov (CINC Western TVD); Osipov (CINC Southwestern TVD); and Yermakov (Commander, Leningrad MD [LEMD]).

By so doing, I hope to establish a viable methodology with which to assess how they might conduct themselves in battle and, hopefully, to evaluate other Soviet operational commanders. To do this, I will:

1. Analyze their career patterns, education, and

professional associations in light of current Soviet military doctrine and Kremlin politics.

2. Evaluate their performance and their writings against a) the Soviet marshals of World War II and b) a list of attributes associated with successful operational commanders, compiled from the study of military theory, historical campaigns, and Soviet views of command.

#### THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR.

Before the war Marshal Zhukov had the opportunity to learn about both his adversaries and about the conduct of combined arms warfare. He attended the Soviet Cavalry Course and the Frunze Academy; according to some sources, also attended the Kriegsakademie in Berlin where he came under the influence of GEN Hans von Seeckt.<sup>5</sup> His extensive education enhanced Zhukov's grasp of mechanized and armored warfare; it involved him in the modernization of the Red Army; and it helped him to implement those concepts on actual fields of battle both against the Japanese in 1939 and the Germans in the 1940s. Zhukov also honed his skills by personally observing events in the Spanish Civil War and by serving as a liaison to China during their war with Japan. Finally, Zhukov capitalized on his experiences fighting the Japanese at Khalkhin-Gol (particularly those lessons concerning the rear, reserves, and echelonnement), and applied them against the Germans

in 1941.

Zhukov was instrumental in nearly every major Soviet victory of World War II from Moscow to Berlin. His success can be attributed both to his uncanny ability to assess the situation quickly and to his "force of presence," which enabled him to carry his plans through to their operational conclusion. For example in early September 1941, he took over the faltering Leningrad Front and rapidly instilled new confidence in its officers and men. When he arrived, morale and discipline were appalling. Units fell back without orders, officers were frequently drunk, and troops ran at the sound of fire. To correct this situation, Zhukov threatened to remedy such "treasonous" actions with execution.<sup>6</sup> In order to isolate the problems, he disbanded some units totally. He frequently visited his subordinate commanders and directed that units not be pulled off the line without his personal approval. He built up his reserves, and accepted risk by thinning his forces along less critical approaches in order to create defense in depth on the likely axes of enemy advance. He also incorporated naval and coastal artillery fires into his defense. By the end of September, in less than a month Zhukov had stabilized the Leningrad Front.

With Zhukov, the mission always came first. At Khalkhin-Gol, when a division commander displayed doubt

about his ability to launch an attack., Zhukov relieved him on the spot and gave command to the division chief of staff. Later when this new commander also was unable to initiate an offensive, Zhukov relieved him and sent one of his own staff officers to take command.<sup>7</sup> At the Battle of Moscow, Zhukov had a similar encounter when he refused to let Marshal Rokossovskiy withdraw. Disagreeing with the decision, Rokossovskiy went to Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff, who agreed with him and authorized the withdrawal to a more defensible position. As the orders were being given, Rokossovskiy received a telegram from his irate commander, which stated:

The troops of the Army Front are under my command!  
I revoke the order withdrawing forces to the Istra Reservoir and order that defense be maintained on the present line without retreating a step backward  
(emphasis in original).<sup>8</sup>

Despite a perceived disregard for the number of Soviet casualties, Zhukov did not recklessly commit troops to battle. When Stalin demanded a counterattack across a broad front before Moscow and when he wanted an offensive at Kursk, Zhukov argued, respectively, for a concentration of force and a defense in order to conserve his combat power and to exploit German weakness. Stalin finally agreed.

In summary, Marshal Zhukov was a harsh leader who mastered his profession and drove himself to physical and emotional limits to defend the Motherland. He expected no

less from his subordinates. His dedication and determination serve as models for today's operational commander.

Unlike Zhukov, Marshal Rokossovskiy was less excitable and made more efficient use of his subordinates. Associates commented on his good manners, civility, and kul'turnost" (culture)--traits rarely attributed to other senior Soviet officers.<sup>9</sup> GEN Kazakov, who had only worked with Rokossovskiy a few days, described him as:

[a] highly civilized man, [who] knew how to listen patiently to everyone. He recognized instantly the essential point of ideas expressed by others and utilized the knowledge and expertise of the collective as a whole in the common cause. It can truly be said that in a very short period Rokossovskiy was able to win over all his new fellow officers. We liked his calm efficiency very much.<sup>10</sup>

Certainly none could say the same of the volatile Zhukov. Yet Rokossovskiy's calm behavior did not reflect a shortage of talent. At Kursk he demonstrated the keen ability to anticipate the enemy's actions and to take risk at the appropriate time and place. He placed over half of his infantry, 70% of his artillery, nearly 90% of his tanks, and both his second echelon and front reserve forces along the 95 kilometers where the German attack was most likely. The remainder of his force covered the rest of the 211 KM of front.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the German offensive, his headquarters received several erroneous reports of imminent attack. Yet on the night of 4 July, enemy

prisoners (EPW) said the assault would begin at 0300 HRS. Rokossovskiy did not have the time to contact Zhukov for permission to begin his counterpreparation fires, but ordered them based on the EPW report. He acted prudently, anticipating the German artillery preparation by only ten minutes. As a result:

The nazis [sic] were taken completely by surprise and decided that we [Soviets, emphasis in original] were launching an offensive. This naturally upset their plans and caused confusion in the ranks.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Rokossovskiy displayed the fortitude to stand up to Stalin on operational issues. Preparing for Operation BAGRATION (which would liberate Belorussia during June 1944) Rokossovskiy planned to launch two armies from Rogachev toward Bobruisk and Osipovichi and another two armies from the lower Berezina toward Slutsk. He chose this course of action because of the terrain (the Polesian marshes prevented larger concentration) and because it would deny the Germans the opportunity to maneuver or to bring up reserves. Stalin disagreed; he wanted only one main attack, and twice threw Rokossovskiy out of his office to rethink the plan. Each time the Marshal offered Stalin the same solution. Stalin ultimately concurred.<sup>13</sup>

Today in the USSR Marshal Rokossovskiy is highly regarded as a model for current operational commander. A recent article in Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal (VIZh)

described him as a dynamic, innovative, and original military leader. It further lauded his artful use of maneuver and his employment of reserves.<sup>14</sup>

Marshal Konev was called "The Soldier's Marshal", no doubt, because he was routinely at the front. This was somewhat different from both Zhukov's and Rokossovskiy's leadership style. Zhukov felt that a commander should work with the troops prior to the battle but once the operation began, he should be at his headquarters or CP in order to direct the operation better.<sup>15</sup> Rokossovskiy never left his CP during the battle of Kursk.<sup>16</sup> Konev, on the other hand, preferred the front. As an example, when his 1st Ukrainian Front fought its way toward Berlin, he observed and commanded from a forward site at the critical forcing of the Spree River.<sup>17</sup>

Konev built up exceptionally good rapport with his subordinates, which enabled them to execute operational maneuver effectively. In the attack on Berlin, he employed the armies of Generals Rybalko and Lelyushenko as mobile groups. Both army commanders were concerned about their logistical support. Konev replied that they should not worry; that was his problem and he would take care of it.<sup>18</sup> He did! Konev described this relationship in his memoirs:

What is the value of friendship between a front commander and a commander of one of his armies during war? First of all it makes for confidence. We had confidence in each other, and confidence is the

bedrock of relations between commanders.

Our mutual confidence formed gradually; it was a result of a lot of joint work under difficult and complicated conditions . . . (emphasis added).<sup>19</sup>

In addition to knowing his subordinates, Konev also clearly recognized the role of operational art. Both at Krakow and in Silesia, he chose to allow the defeated German armies to escape rather than to encircle them. He did this because he understood the importance of both preserving Silesian industry and cultivating Polish gratitude to the "higher political and strategic interests"<sup>20</sup> of the USSR in post-war Europe. Furthermore, Konev realized that he had nevertheless established favorable conditions for his subsequent assault on Dresden and Berlin.

Konev's leadership talents and his ability to look beyond the battlefield to the desired political ends reflect a high level of operational skill to which today's commanders should also aspire.

What lessons should we draw from these operational commanders? They had similar attributes; each possessed vision and knowledge of the enemy. Each recognized the importance of good command and control (C<sup>2</sup>). And each properly coordinated his combined arms assets without neglecting the significance of the moral dimension of war. Yet despite the similarities, the three marshals were distinct individuals. Their relationships with

subordinates contrasted. They positioned themselves differently on the battlefield. They even argued among themselves and with Stalin over operational issues. Yet each was successful in his own particular way. How do today's operational commanders compare? First, let's review some pertinent events of the past two decades.

#### CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS.

Under Khrushchev, Soviet nuclear warfare doctrine had denigrated the role of the Ground Forces, operational maneuver, and even the operational art. But by the mid-1960s, military doctrine gradually began to shift from one which planned exclusively for a short nuclear war to one which accepted the possibility of a short conventional phase in a future war. Events such as the U.S. shift from massive retaliation to flexible response, the war in Vietnam, and the Six Day Arab-Israeli War refocused Soviet military thinking. These factors, coupled with the need for Soviet conventional forces to quell liberalism in Czechoslovakia and to protect Siberian borders from the Chinese, led to a resurgence of the Ground Forces and brought about a renewed force modernization program.<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, the Yom Kippur War of 1973 offered the Soviet military additional lessons and the Ground Forces again reorganized to meet the changing requirements of warfare. By 1977, the USSR was preparing for the

eventuality that wars could, in fact, be waged and won by purely conventional means. As a consequence, operational art and operational maneuver regained importance. To implement the required changes and to ensure their successful employment in the field, the Kremlin appointed its most visionary thinker, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, to the post of Chief of the General Staff--the "brain of the army."

Ogarkov's background, which included experience in arms control; military engineering; troop command; and supervision of programs related to research, development, and weapons procurement, made him well-suited to implement the required programs. He elaborated on his reforms in several articles published during the early eighties.<sup>22</sup>

He wrote that new technologies, particularly improved conventional arms having the same destructiveness as nuclear weapons, were changing the nature of war and placing new demands on both the military and the nation. He envisaged that future war would be waged at a much higher tempo and that troop control would be further complicated by the increased speeds, distances, and scope. He felt that success in such a war would require a military force capable of rapid movement, coordination between all the arms, deep strikes, deep and massive fires, and continuous sustainment and replenishment of losses. Ogarkov believed that this new reality placed

five key demands on the Soviet Union and its military. They were: 1) a new organization, which would better employ the new technologies; 2) a new command and control system to provide uninterrupted troop control; 3) highly skilled commanders at all levels who could effectively employ the technology and lead reorganized units on the fluid battlefield; 4) a patriotic and motivated corps of conscripts; and 5) a national economic-technical base to provide the required numbers and types of weapons, support, and control systems.

In his pamphlet Always in Readiness to Defend the Fatherland, Ogarkov noted that during the Great Patriotic War, fronts generally paused after a sucessful operation before commencing another one; in the future this would not be wise.<sup>23</sup> To remedy this he proposed the establishment of peacetime High Commands of Forces (HCF) to control Theaters of Military Operations (TVD).

Although similar commands were unsuccessful during the initial stages of World War II, the Stavka decided that it needed some system both to act in its stead in the field and to control directly multi-front operations (to include ground, air, and sea forces, as appropriate). This was done in Europe by the personal actions of Stavka representatives and in the Far East by Vasilevskiy's HCF. Given Soviet views on future warfare prevalent in the late 1970s--a dynamic, rapidly changing extended battlefield

both in time and space, which requires coordination between air, land, and naval forces--the Soviets created an experimental HCF for the Far Eastern TVD under General Petrov in 1979.<sup>24</sup>

During 1979 the Soviets also initiated a sweeping Ground Forces' reorganization. Air Assault Brigades and Battalions were created at front and army, and attack helicopter units were established in army and division. Artillery was nearly doubled at front and army, as battalions went from 18 to 24 guns and regiments grew into brigades. In maneuver divisions artillery also increased as tank regiments received howitzer battalions. Additionally, new weapons with increased ranges, enhanced mobility and flexibility were deployed, such as the 2S5, BM-27, SS-21, and the SA-13.<sup>25</sup> As foreseen by Ogarkov, these changes placed additional demands for technical expertise and quality leadership on commanders at all levels from the front to the battalion.

The rise of Solidarity in Poland and the collapse of the Taraki government in Afghanistan opened new avenues for Ogarkov to implement his reforms. The Soviet invasion and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan provided a school to test new formations, new equipment, and the performance of the officer corps. Historically, crises on the Soviet borders have offered the opportunity to initiate sweeping personnel changes in the MD/GOF commands.<sup>26</sup> In 1979 and

1980 a major shake-up occurred, as thirteen of twenty MD/GOF changed hands (See Table A). Although many of the changes were reshuffles of the same faces to new jobs, some of the older commanders who had been in their posts for over ten years were removed. This allowed for the upward mobility of younger officers who were eager to begin implementing the changes directed by Ogarkov and the General Staff. For example, Generals Yazov (Central Group of Forces [CGF]), Snetkov (Siberian MD [SIMD]), and Postnikov (North Caucasus MD [NCMD]) took over their first senior operational level commands,<sup>27</sup> with Postnikov becoming the first MD/GOF commander without World War II experience. Yet the changes were just the beginning.

In September 1984, three additional HCFs were created in the West, Southwest, and South. Requirements for commanders and staffs to fill out these commands opened the door for the advancement of a new generation of operational commander (Table B).<sup>28</sup> Eight of the new commanders, like Postnikov before them, were too young to have served in the Great Patriotic War. These included: Yermakov (CGF), Betekhtin (Baltic [BAMD]), Osipov (Kiev [KIMD]), Lobov (Central Asia [CAMD]) and Popov (Turkestan [TUMD]), among others. Of the 20 commands, up to 13 were held by officers of the post war generation and six were run by men with experience supporting the war in Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup>

By the time Ogarkov left the General Staff, the Soviet military had implemented the first two of his proposals and had begun work on the third (See pages 12-13). Yet, it would take a new General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, to set the wheels turning in order to accomplish the final two. With his philosophy of glasnost' and perestroyka, Gorbachev put new emphasis on the socio-political nature of Soviet military doctrine and initiated nation-wide economic reforms, both of which may have frightened some of the shortsighted members of the military hierarchy. Taking steps to gain support for his programs, Gorbachev used the Chernobyl disaster and Matthias Rust's unscheduled landing on Red Square to make a clean sweep of the Defense Ministry. He elevated GEN Yazov, the Far East MD commander, first to the Deputy Minister for Personnel Affairs and then to the post of Defense Minister over no fewer than 15 more senior generals and marshals. Additionally, Gorbachev replaced the CINC of the Warsaw Pact, the Chief of the General Staff, the Chief of the Main Political Administration, the commandants of the Frunze and Voroshilov Academies, and the CINC of every armed force (save the Air Force) with generals who support his programs.<sup>30</sup>

At the MD/GOF levels, this action has had tremendous residual effects. Since October 1988 at least ten new and still younger officers have taken command.<sup>31</sup> The overall

make-up of the current crop of MD/GOF commanders reflects that there are three different roads to gain an appointment as a MD/GOF commander. One group reached this plateau by successful command at the army level in GSFG, while another rose from the leading ranks of the 40th Army in Afghanistan. The members of the third group acquired their commands by virtue of their recent service in the Far East with the Yazov group (Table C).

Changes in the Soviet military over the past 10-15 years have been myriad. Each of Ogarkov's five proposals have been addressed, albeit to varying degrees of success.

Certainly, organization and troop control have been enhanced with new equipment, new headquarters, and new units. Gorbachev has also taken steps to improve the national economic base. If successful, the military should benefit in the long run. Lastly there are the issues of command competency and troop motivation. Both are concerns now being discussed in the Soviet military press; each will be addressed subsequently in this paper.

#### TODAY'S OPERATIONAL COMMANDER--CAREER ANALYSES.

This brings us to our case studies. Who are they? How do they compare with their contemporaries and with their predecessors? Are they qualified to command at the levels in question or are they merely the direct or indirect beneficiaries of political maneuverings? In

either case, what are the backgrounds, qualities, and character attributes of today's Soviet operational commander?

GEN Mikhail M. Zaytsev is an exceptional commander who has been instrumental in the application of military reforms for the past 10-15 years. A tank officer who served in World War II, he graduated from the Tank Academy (1954), the Voroshilov Academy (1965), and commanded a regiment, a division, and an army in the 1950s and 1960s. Unlike most officers, Zaytsev spent the majority of his career in one district, the Belorussian MD (BEMD). He commanded the Rogachev Guards Motor Rifle Division (MRD) in Minsk. This division was the MD's best equipped, "show" unit, and is now one of the Soviet Union's two Unified Army Corps.<sup>32</sup> While commanding this division, Zaytsev participated in the Dnepr '67 exercise and was lauded as "balanced, judicious, [and] admirably clear in issuing orders, at all stages [of the exercise] he organized his subordinates intelligently."<sup>33</sup> A year later, he became a GEN-MAJ and chief of staff of an army. In 1969 he took command of an army. Given these positions, it is quite likely that he took part in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

In 1972 he became the first deputy commander of BEMD under GEN Ivan Tret'yak, whom he replaced as commander in 1976. In Dec 1980 Zaytsev took command of the prestigious

GSFG. There he oversaw the initiation of the 1980 force reorganization and supervised the training of the best-equipped armies in the Soviet Ground Forces. He presided over a 1981 exercise in which one of his divisions acted as an army OMG.<sup>34</sup> One could surmise that Zaytsev had personal experience with the OMG concept from his days in BEMD and the Rogachev Division. Additionally, he commanded GSFG during the deployment of the USSR's first missile firing tanks and the initial placement of SS-12s in Eastern Europe.<sup>35</sup> He was clearly trusted by the party leadership, as evidenced both by his military positions as well as by his membership in the party Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In 1983 he received the award of the Order of Lenin for his contribution to raising military readiness, for his skilled direction of units and formations, and for his personal courage during the Great Patriotic War.<sup>36</sup>

Zaytsev has been referred to as a no nonsense, intelligent and decisive field commander. He expects his subordinate commanders to be innovative, technically proficient, and capable of making sound and timely decisions. An ardent task master, Zaytsev stresses combat readiness and field training in his commands. His published articles indicate that some of his chief concerns are air defense, development of junior officers, and command and control.

In July 1985 Zaytsev left GSFG to take command of the Southern TVD, which includes the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan. Little is known of his role in the conduct of the Afghanistan War; however, Zaytsev was probably involved in the planning and execution of all major operations since Fall 1985. A recent Newsweek article noted that Zaytsev was told either to win the war quickly or to expect that a political solution would be sought. Gorbachev, dissatisfied with the progress of the military effort, chose the latter.<sup>37</sup> Gorbachev's decision, coupled with Zaytsev's recent, untimely, retirement, would indicate that Zaytsev is paying the price of a commander, who, despite his peacetime successes, could not achieve victory in combat.<sup>38</sup>

GEN Boris V. Snetkov is the last remaining World War II veteran to command at the MD/GOF level. He was selected to take command of GSFG in November 1987 over several other logical candidates because of his seniority, his long service in GSFG, and his extensive experience in planning and executing large scale maneuvers.

Like Zaytsev, Snetkov is a tank officer and member of the Central Committee. He graduated from the Tank Academy in the 1950s and from the Voroshilov Academy in 1968; Snetkov was awarded a Gold Star for academic excellence during his tenure at the Voroshilov. From 1979-81 Snetkov commanded the Siberian MD (SIMD), making him part of the

initial TVD experiment. He later commanded Leningrad MD (LEMD) from 1981-87.

Based on his background, Snetkov appears to have had the role of translating the recent developments in Soviet military doctrine into practical application. He commands GSFG at a time when Gorbachev is promising to cut back the number of troops, tanks, artillery, engineers, and air assault units in Eastern Europe, with the bulk coming from GSFG. Four of Snetkov's divisions are scheduled for removal during 1989 and 1990.<sup>39</sup> He, like Zaytsev before him, will soon oversee a significant reorganization and then be forced to modify his Group's command and control, operational planning, and training in order to satisfy political and doctrinal imperatives.

Snetkov is as skilled an officer as Zaytsev. His publications express technical competence, dynamic leadership, and political astuteness. Nevertheless, regardless of any successes in command of GSFG, Snetkov will likely not receive another field command. He will probably retire, as Zaytsev did, and the Soviet Army will lose one of its most experienced and capable operational commanders.<sup>40</sup>

GEN Stanislav I. Postnikov joined the army in 1948 and entered the party in 1957. As an infantry officer he commanded a company, battalion, regiment, and division in the 1950s and 60s. He graduated from the Frunze in 1961

and in 1969 completed the Voroshilov Adacemy with a Gold Star as a LTC.

Postnikov is a protege of GEN Gerasimov, former CINC SWTVD. From 1969-74 Postnikov was in GSFG commanding a Guards Motor Rifle Division and serving as an army chief of staff. Gerasimov was the army commander. Postnikov was chief of staff of Northern Group of Forces (NGF) from 1974-77, and from 1977-79 as staff chief of KIMD. Both were commanded by Gerasimov. Between these positions, Postnikov commanded an army in Armenia. Eventually, Postnikov got his chance to command a MD, taking over the North Caucasus in 1979. He thus became the first MD commander who had not served in World War II. Although the NCMD is not a key district militarily, it is significant because it includes Stavropol--Gorbachev's home and power base.<sup>41</sup> In 1980 Postnikov received command of BAMD. While there he was selected to command the southern forces during the Zapad '81 exercise.

The Zapad '81 exercise was designed

to test new concepts and methods of Soviet military science and military art, to develop greater initiative and independence of commanders at all levels, and to measure the performance and response time of (mobilized) reserve elements and the combat readiness of the participating units.<sup>42</sup>

The northern forces, commanded by GEN Ivanovskiy of BEMD, received most of the attention because they employed "a wide range of highly mobile, maneuverable, and flexible

formations,"<sup>43</sup> including a mobile group, as well as airborne, air assault, amphibious desant, and deep strikes into the rear of the defending south. Given the current Kremlin emphasis on the defensiveness of its military doctrine, Postnikov's role as commander of the defending front takes on added significance.

From 1984-87, Postnikov commanded the Transbaykal MD (TBMD). Since the neighboring FEMD was commanded by GEN Yazov and the TVD CINC was GEN Tret'yak, he certainly must have had contact with both. Yazov, as the Deputy Defense Minister for Personnel, was instrumental in Postnikov's transfer to Moscow in February 1987 to become First Deputy CINC of the Ground Forces under GEN Ivanovskiy. Yazov, no doubt, also played a major role in Postnikov's replacement of Ogarkov as CINC WTVD in late 1988. Postnikov, thus, became the first TVD commander who had not served in World War II.

It is noteworthy that just prior to taking that job, Postnikov wrote an article in VIZh outlining and praising Marshal Zhukov's defense at Kursk.<sup>44</sup> Quite likely, he received this prestigious position because of both his many benefactors and because of his demonstrated expertise in defensive operations (the article and Zapad '81). GEN Postnikov is a highly regarded operational level commander, an ideal choice to implement Gorbachev's and Ogarkov's programs, and a model for officers of the

post-war generation to emulate.

GEN-COL Vladimir V. Osipov is also a "fast burner." He took over the large KIMD in October 1984 at the young age of 44. Prior to that he was BEMD first deputy (1983-4) and a tank army commander in GSFG from 1980-83. In 1977 he commanded the Rogachev Division in BEMD. He has followed in Zaytsev's shoes, served under Zaytsev, and like his mentor is closely connected with ground force operational innovations. He was one of the first army commanders to control attack helicopters, air assault troops, an expanded artillery brigade, and divisions with large numbers of T-80s (or T-64Bs) and BMP-2s. In 1986 he was given candidate status in the Central Committee.

In February 1989 Osipov relinquished command of KIMD to GEN-LT Boris Gromov (former commander of 40th Army in Afghanistan) to become CINC of the Soutwestern TVD. At 49, Osipov is now the youngest TVD commander. Given this, plus the flavor of his published articles which deal with officer development and moral issues, Osipov is certainly highly regarded by the Kremlin.

GEN-COL Viktor F. Yermakov, who has commanded LEMD since November 1987, has had a varied career. He graduated from the Kiev Joint School of Self-Propelled Artillery in 1956 and from the Frunze in the early 1960s.<sup>45</sup> He was cited for excellent performance while commanding a MRR in the Moscow MD in 1973. Three years

later he graduated from the Voroshilov Academy with honors and subsequently served in GSFG. By 1979 he was commanding a "large formation" (army or corps) in the Odessa MD, and from 1982-3 served in Afghanistan, probably as commander of the 40th Army.<sup>\*\*</sup> From 1983-4 he was again at the Voroshilov Academy, perhaps teaching mountain operations based on his Afghanistan experiences. In October 1984 he took over the CGF in Czechoslovakia, and in 1987 became commander of LEMD. Although not yet a member of the party Central Committee, Yermakov has been a delegate to the last two party congresses. His experience in the groups of forces, Afghanistan, and behind the instructor's podium give Yermakov a wide perspective on the profession of arms. His background, his youth, and his outstanding performance in diverse fields should hold him in good stead well into the future.

#### PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS.

Attributes of operational commanders can be divided into three categories: knowledge; character; and skills.

One must know and understand the technical side of war. This includes the effective employment of all combined arms assets at one's disposal and of the logistical support to sustain the force. Further, one must know his enemy and understand human nature--the moral

domain of war.

An operational commander needs to be politically attuned to his national leaders and to his allies so that he can connect his operational actions to their strategic goals. Personally, he must have the courage to pursue his ends despite adversity and opposition and must be willing to accept risk when his means are insufficient.

The operational commander must have skill in dealing with subordinates (included in this are both C<sup>3</sup> issues, training and the development of junior officers). Finally, he must possess the abilities associated with coup d'oeil--to see beyond the moment, to resource that vision, and to motivate others to achieve it.

KNOWLEDGE. Certainly the education, the long careers, and the years in command have provided the five generals under review with a tremendous amount of knowledge of the art of war. However, only Zaytsev, Snetkov, and Postnikov have expressed it openly in unclassified publications.

Zaytsev understands the changing nature of war, the importance of proper coordination of combined arms assets, and the fact that theory guides, but only realistic training will bring success in battle. In a 1976 article he wrote

Attainment of victory with [the] least [number of] losses is unthinkable if the commanders have not mastered contemporary theory and practice of conducting combat operations.<sup>47</sup>

He believes that all officers, and commanders in particular, must be comfortable in their environment, that is, know the equipment, the soldiers, the enemy, and the terrain in order to be able to lead under the conditions of modern war. In an article entitled, "Creativity in Tactics," Zaytsev commented:

The commander's ability to see the battle in all dimensions and to influence the development of events, . . . to create the battle, is one of the most important indicators of an officer's professional maturity. Deepening their knowledge of the regulations' provisions, the principles of contemporary battle, and the combat capabilities of weapons and combat equipment in the course of lessons on command training, the officers find the correct path to the achievement of success in battle.<sup>48</sup>

Although his 1979 article dealt with air defense, his conclusion summarizes Zaytsev's philosophy on the burdens a combined arms commander must shoulder:

The maintaining of the air-defense means in constant combat readiness, the improvement of the methods of employing them in combat, the constant increase in the professional knowledge, the constant search for the most effective means of teaching the personnel--all these constitute the very important task of the combined-arms commander.<sup>49</sup>

Snetkov used an article dealing with the 1944 Karelian operation to discuss methods of breaching a defense in depth over difficult terrain. He addressed the roles of deception, sequels, deep attack, flexibility, and land-sea action. He noted that preparation began early enough to allow time for rehearsals and for "regrouping" of large forces in order to achieve local advantage at the

breakthrough point. Nevertheless, the plan was flexible enough to allow the Leningrad Front to switch its "main effort to the coastal sector, where the greatest success had taken shape."<sup>50</sup> In his analysis of the operation, Snetkov praised the selection of the axes of advance, the employment of artillery in the breakthrough, and the close coordination between ground, naval, and naval air forces. This article demonstrates not only Snetkov's knowledge and analytical abilities, but also a likely modus operandi.

Unlike most of the other commanders in question, Snetkov also seems to have a grasp for logistical issues. While addressing problems associated with the rear while commanding LEMD, Snetkov translated those problems into tactical and operational shortfalls that would adversely affect combat capabilities. He observed that more realistic training for rear troops was required, since good food, resupply and maintenance in garrison meant little if it could not be replicated in the field.<sup>51</sup> Snetkov was so adamant about this, that he wrote that officers who could not rectify the situation should "step aside" to allow more "competent and energetic" officers to take their place.<sup>52</sup>

As stated earlier, Postnikov is a recognized expert on the art of defense who fully comprehends the conduct of combined arms warfare. He observed that today many Soviet

officers do not perform well in the defense since they believe it to be passive. To demonstrate the value of the defense for today's battlefield, he explained Zhukov's defense at Kursk in summer 1943. Postnikov argued strongly that Zhukov was not forced to go on the defense, but rather he thoroughly planned it in order to "wear down the enemy." He further explained the phases: defense and counterattack, putting emphasis on the latter, and addressed the criticality of timing:

A complicated problem, facing our commanders, was the determination of the time to go over to the counteroffensive. It should begin at that moment, when the offensive capability of the enemy is already spent, but he has still neither gone on the defense nor formed a defensive disposition. <sup>53</sup>

Postnikov explained that Zhukov's plan, itself, "set the conditions" for the eventual counterattack. He also commented that a successful defense requires good reconnaissance, intelligence, adequate reserves, mobility, and flexibility. Should Postnikov's tenets be instilled in the troops of the WTVD, the resulting operational enhancements could help to offset the effects of Gorbachev's announced troop reductions.

Other than the required criticisms of American aggression, the dangers of NATO, and the threat of imperialist aggression, none of the commanders in question has addressed "the enemy" directly in his articles. While this may not indicate a lack of knowledge, it does point

out that this issue is one on which operational commanders do not write. It is noteworthy, however, that Zaytsev once did address advantages accrued to a force from hating its enemy. He praised a commander who used U.S. atrocities in Lebanon and Grenada to arouse his soldiers against the aggressors on an exercise in much the same way that the Red Army raised the troops' ire against the Nazis.<sup>54</sup> Should Zaytsev desire his soldiers to demonstrate this much passion in a mere exercise, he would likely also try to cause them to respond even more intently in actual combat. He demonstrated this during his first full year in command of the STVD. In 1986, the Soviets intensified their scorched earth program in Afghanistan, took the Mujahideen base at Zhawar, and inflicted heavy losses on rebel forces in the Qandahar area.<sup>55</sup> Yet despite Zaytsev's intensity and leadership, his Afghanistan campaign proved unsuccessful.

Soviet doctrine has always recognized the importance of the socio-political nature of war. Since the rise of Gorbachev this factor has taken on added significance. Today it seems that the primary emphasis of these operational commanders is now on moral issues. Postnikov charged commanders to create a favorable work atmosphere. Osipov wrote that commanders must draw people to them; they must work with the troops and help them handle their problems. A good commander, he said,

demonstrates a strong will, but shows compassion toward his subordinates.<sup>57</sup>

The reason for this added emphasis is quite clear. The Soviet military has a social function to perform. It is charged with transforming young males into upstanding and productive Soviet citizens. Unfortunately for Gorbachev and his armed forces, the services have not been very successful in this role. Recruits are frequently harassed and, at times, even beaten. Their new uniforms are taken from them by "more senior" privates. Barracks are poorly heated; roofs leak; and toilet facilities are located a good distance away. Officers have generally ignored these conditions and accepted them as normal components of military life. Is there any wonder then, why few Soviets look back on their years in service with any great affection? Furthermore, morale issues have become even more evident in Afghanistan as soldiers turned to drugs to supplement the national addiction--alcohol.

As a result of these ills, all five authors have addressed the role of the army as a "school for life," and have called for commanders at all levels to take steps to improve troop morale and the quality of life. General Osipov described the desired ends this way:

However improved military equipment may be, the chief figure in the army remains the man who masters this equipment. Educated, well-trained people are joining the ranks of the motherland's defenders. During their years of service they pass through a good school for maturing: they are tempered politically

and the best qualities of man and citizen are strengthened--flaming patriotism, responsibility to society, and a readiness to accomplish their constitutional and military duty at any price.<sup>58</sup>

Several of the authors have also related these issues to war fighting capabilities. Dealing with the Karelian operation, Snetkov noted that Party work improved the soldiers' fighting spirit and produced "a great outpouring of aggressiveness"<sup>59</sup> in them. Earlier he identified the moral domain as a combat multiplier:

The ability to withstand tremendous spiritual and physical tensions; high psychological composure; [are] methods of action enabling lesser forces to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy (emphasis added).<sup>60</sup>

Zaytsev so valued the moral domain as to call combat readiness, "a special state of mind and heart in the soldier."<sup>61</sup>

Despite the many similarities of these commanders' views on moral issues, Osipov and Snetkov appear to have divergent philosophies of how to obtain the desired results. In their articles, both use the Russian term trebovatel'nost', which means "exactingness." For Snetkov, the term connotes adherence to regulations, placing demands on one's subordinates, and strengthening discipline. Although Osipov does recognize the importance of firmness, discipline, and command authority, he says that this was not enough. "The commander must combine his official authority with personal, moral prestige. . . It

is not simply a matter of mastering a collection of rules.<sup>62</sup> He must be selfless, caring, tactful, and ethical, in addition to knowledgeable and proficient.

GEN Betekhtin, First Deputy CINC of the Ground Forces, once described a "bad" commander, who claimed to have punished violators, yet the lapses of discipline continued, and he could not seem to find the solution. In reply, the "good" commander asked, "Have you tried to find out the reasons for these violations?"<sup>63</sup> Since Betekhtin is currently responsible for both training and quality of life issues in the Ground Forces, it appears that Osipov's style is now in vogue. Should it catch on with more senior officers, the quality of the junior officer and the morale of the conscript could improve noticeably.

CHARACTER. The position of MD/GOF commanders in the Party Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet shows their political stature. Glowing references to the party's leadership, to the party's history, and to the party's programs indicate both a close association and an acceptance of the party's right to control the military.

Soviet commanders, including the five in question, have offered in their public writings high praise for the brotherhood and good will felt between the Soviet Army and its Warsaw Pact allies. However, there are cracks which could adversely affect the operational commander. Despite the laudatory comments, Soviets are still a haughty

people; they look down upon non-Slavs and non-Soviets, including the members of the Warsaw Pact. Yet in the Groups of Forces problems with morale, training, maintenance, and quality of life are visibly apparent, and the East Europeans must recognize areas where they are superior to the Soviets.<sup>64</sup>

Other than for service in one of the Groups or in Afghanistan, few senior commanders have ever been abroad. Soviet officers who are attaches, military advisors, or foreign liaison officers seldom command above division. True, some like Generals Petrov and Konchits have done both, but they are the exceptions.<sup>65</sup> The Soviet senior commanders' inexperience with the Third World has resulted in a general lack of understanding on their part, and could portend additional Afghanistan-like failures, should the Kremlin again choose to utilize ground forces in support of foreign policy goals outside the western theater. The potential also exists for increased animosity within the Warsaw Pact, as both the perception of the "threat" diminishes in the face of perestroika, and the East Europeans gain a modicum of independence.

From the articles alone, it is not possible to assess the commander's courage or his ability to accept risk on the battlefield. Both Snetkov and Postnikov recognized and implicitly sanctioned the risks taken by commanders at Karelia and Kursk. Yet this does not prove their own

courage. Possibly, those calling for more initiative from subordinates might be willing to accept the associated risk. Zaytsev wrote that junior commanders should be put into positions during training where they can demonstrate boldness, courage and daring.<sup>66</sup> He did just that in Afghanistan by employing small, independent units against the Mujahideen.

ABILITY. Like the moral issue addressed above, the development of junior officers is currently a major theme in the Soviet Army, particularly among the operational commanders. Most of them observed that since modern war would be dynamic and rapidly changing, it called for commanders who could react swiftly and smartly to those conditions. For this reason they have frequently called for more realistic training, for junior officers to demonstrate creativity, and for senior officers to take the time to cultivate their subordinates' technical and tactical skills. They also stressed proper use of C<sup>3</sup> technology.

Zaytsev, for example, called for training which causes junior commanders to think analytically, to react quickly, and to make sound decisions.<sup>67</sup> And he charged senior commanders with the task of nurturing them:

It is well known that commanders are not born. They become such thanks to painstaking training, industriousness and persistence; and thanks to the concern of senior commanders and officers who skillfully and assiduously pass on their rich experience acquired at the front and in the peacetime routine of

many years of service. From day to day, we teach our officer cadres what they need in war.<sup>68</sup>

Yermakov urged new drills, in which officers would face "unaccustomed situations," rather than the same problems they have seen previously.<sup>69</sup> In his article, "Control of Subunits--On the Level of Contemporary Demands," Postnikov stressed the importance of OPSEC, redundancy in communications, speeding the decision cycle, and planning for the fog of war. He even addressed the commanders' dilemma of secrecy versus control.

When coupled with recent force restructurings and Gorbachev's announced force reductions, these articles could have substantial significance. They possibly portend a junior commander more capable of exercising independent thought and action, who can better cope with the fog and friction of future war.

Vision, like courage, is difficult to assess from the writings alone. However, when all the articles are taken collectively, only Zaytsev, and possibly Snetkov and Postnikov, have demonstrated sufficient expertise to warrant the award of vision. Snetkov and Postnikov showed that they recognized "vision" at Karelia and Kursk, respectively. Whether either has the ability to translate his vision into reality, remains to be seen. Zaytsev demonstrated vision during exercises, in command of BEMD and GSFG, and even in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, for

him, he was not able to translate his Afghan vision into operational success.

#### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS.

There seem to be three distinct types of Soviet operational commander: the thinker-innovator; the implementer-synthesizer; and the politico-trainer.

The first group consists of men like MSU Orgakov. Yet all the "thinkers" remaining on active duty have been moved to key staff positions in order to work on doctrinal and political-military issues. Possibly they may again command. Clearly, Postnikov's changes from MD command to Ground Forces staff to TVD command provide a precedent. However, for the moment, it appears that the "thinkers" will remain on staffs, while generals from the next groups will command.

Zaytsev, Snetkov, and Postnikov are the implementers of the policies and the doctrine created by the first group. They possess the knowledge, the traits, and the skills required of operational commanders. They would be the most capable adversaries on the battlefield. Nevertheless, this group is not without flaws. It is small and getting smaller. Zaytsev has retired, Snetkov will follow in about a year. Only time will tell if some of the newer MD/GOF commanders will demonstrate the

knowledge, expertise, and abilities commensurate with this group.

The final group includes Osipov and Yermakov. It is the largest of the three and, at present, includes the new breed of operational commander. Clearly these men are capable officers, schooled in Soviet doctrine and the operational art; nevertheless, they appear to lack the breadth, depth, and experience of their predecessors. Based on career patterns and published articles, there are only few who have demonstrated the potential to reach the standards of the first two groups.

How can this biographic knowledge be exploited? First, we should recognize the opposing commander's strengths and concerns. If a MD commander has frequently served in the same TVD, if he has commanded an OMG on exercises, and if he has written about air defense and river crossings, these are likely to be his areas of expertise. Conversely, the fact that a commander has not written about combat logistics or the interface between land and air forces (few have), and he is now serving in the WTVD for the first time, could portend personal and professional weaknesses, which might be exploited.

Second, we should consider the background, size and nature of prior commands, the political status and education of the commander. In the past, MD commanders

have been groomed for their jobs by first being made a district Chief of Staff or First Deputy, and then commanding a smaller MD, before taking over a larger one, such as KIMD, BEMD, or GSFG. Currently this is often not being done.<sup>70</sup>

The frequent turn-over of MD commands and the rapid elevation of relatively inexperienced officers have created conditions whereby the "Peter Principle" is likely to apply. Of the 20 MD/GOF commanders, some are certainly working beyond their capabilities. Even if we assume that this is being done intentionally by Gorbachev and Yazov in order to facilitate their short term goals regarding morale and leadership, then we must expect that prior to any hostilities, they will appoint different commanders who possess the requisite warfighting skills. Yet this is no easy task. Both Rokossovskiy and Konev demonstrated the value of knowing one's subordinates. Since World War II, cliques have developed, in which certain generals continuously worked together at various levels in different MDs. Today the MD/GOF command turn-over is so extensive that this is not being done. Here, too, we might uncover a vulnerability if we learn that key officers in an operational command has just begun to work together.

Concerning education, a Gold Star recipient from the Voroshilov Academy should be considered a formidable

opponent. We might be able to identify a shifting main effort should we find a Gold Star general or a general from the Central Committee replacing a less honored commander.

Third, we should analyze what the commander has written. We should also consider that topics not addressed may be even more telling. Few operational commanders write about logistics or the conduct of the air campaign. They treat unconventional warfare, joint and combined operations, and even air assault operations in the most general terms, leaving the detailed analysis to the experts.<sup>71</sup> The current paucity of substantive articles from today's MD/ GOF commanders could either reflect a lack of concern or of expertise. Both offer us potential areas to attack.

Finally, where possible, we should compile data from any personal observations, from exercise participation, and from combat experience. It is particularly critical to uncover information on those who have fought in Afghanistan. Wars change people. Commanders who had been outstanding in peacetime might have failed miserably in war. Some might have taken inappropriate lessons from Afghanistan, which are not applicable to other theaters. Or they might resent subordinates and peers who did not take part in the war. All of these are potential items of friction in the operational command; they could be

exploited if we were cognizant of them.

The study of biographics and personalities is no panacea; however, its findings, as demonstrated above, are useful to Western commanders and to analysts studying the USSR, the Communist Party, and the Soviet military. Although biographics, by itself, will not win us any battles, I am certain that it can measurably assist our operational commanders and planners.

TABLE A

MILITARY DISTRICT, GROUP OF FORCES, AND T'VD  
COMMAND CHANGES 1979-1980

COMMANDER 1979		COMMANDER 1980	
UNIT	(DATE OF ASSIGNMENT)	AGE	AGE
GSFG	Ivanovskiy (1972)	61	Zaytsev 57
NGF	Zarudin (1978)	56	No Change
CGF <sup>1</sup>	Sukhorukhov (1976)	57	Borisov 56
BEMD	Zaytsev (1976)	56	Ivanovskiy 62
CPMD	Varennikov (1973)	56	Belikov 55
BAMD	Mayorov (1972)	59	Postnikov 52
SGF	Krivda (1975)	?	Sivenok ?
KIMD	Gerasimov (1976)	58	No Change
ODMD	Volishin (1974)	?	No Change
TUMD	Belonozhko (1969)	60s	Maksimov 56
TCMD	Kulishov (1978)	51	No Change
NCMD <sup>1</sup>	Belikov (1976)	54	Meretskov 55
FETVD	Petrov (1979)	62	Govorov 56
FEMD	Tret'yak (1976)	56	No Change
SIMD	Khomulo (1969)	60	Snetkov 55
TBMD	Belik (1966)	70	Salmanov 58
CAMD	Lushev (1977)	56	Yazov 57
LEMID	Sorokin (1976)	57	No Change
MOMD	Govorov (1972)	55	Lushev 57
URMD	Sil'chenko (1970)	60	Tyagunov 55
VOMD	Konchits (1977)	54	No Change

<sup>1</sup> MD changed command twice during 1979-80.

TABLE B

MILITARY DISTRICT, GROUP OF FORCES, AND TVD  
COMMAND CHANGES 1984

COMMANDER 1983				
UNIT	(DATE OF ASSIGNMENT)	AGE	COMMANDER 1984	AGE
WTVD			Ogarkov	67
GSFG	Zaytsev (1980)	60	No Change	
NGF	Zarudin (1978)	59	Kovtunov	51
CGF	Borisov (1980)	59	*Yermakov	49
BEMD	Ivanovskiy (1980)	65	No Change	
CPMD	Belikov (1979)	58	No Change	
BAMD	Postnikov (1980)	55	*Betekhtin	53
SWTVD			Gerasimov	63
SGF	*Kochetov (1982)	51	No Change	
KIMD	Gerasimov (1975)	62	*Osipov	^4
ODMD	Yelagin (1982)	?	No Change	
STVD			Maksimov	60
TUMD	Maksimov (1979)	59	*Popov	54
TCMD	*Arkhipov (1983)	50	No Change	
NCMD	Meretskov (1980)	59	*Skokov	49
FETVD	Govorov (1980)	59	Tret'yak	61
FEMD	Tret'yak (1976)	60	Yazov	61
SIMD	Popov (1981)	53	*Vostrov	55
TBMD	Salmanov (1979)	61	*Postnikov	56
CAMD	Yazov (1980)	60	*Lobov	49
LEMD	Snetkov (1981)	58	No Change	
MOMD	Lushev (1980)	60	No Change	
URMD <sup>1</sup>	Tyagunov (1980)	58	Grachev	?
VOMD	Ryakhov (1981)	?	No Change	

<sup>1</sup>MD changed command twice during 1984.

\*Individual did not serve in World War II.

TABLE C

MILITARY DISTRICT, GROUP OF FORCES AND TVD  
COMMANDERS MARCH 1989

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE ASSIGNED</u>	<u>EXPERIENCE</u>
WTVD	GEN <sup>1</sup>	POSTNIKOV, S. I.	OCT 88	Yazov
GSFG	GEN	SNETKOV, B. V.	NOV 87	GSFG
NGF	GEN-COL	KORBUTOV, I. I.	JAN 87	
CGF	GEN-LT	VOROB'YEV, E. A.	NOV 87	
BEMD	GEN-LT	KOSTENKO, A. I.	MAR 89	
CPMD	GEN-COL	SKOKOV, V. V.	AUG 86	
BAMD	GEN-MAJ	KUZ'MIN, F. M.	JAN 89	Yazov
SWTVD	GEN-COL	OSIPOV, V. V.	FEB 89	GSFG
SGF	GEN-LT	BURLAKOV, M.	JUL 88	
KIMD	GEN-LT	GROMOV, B. V.	FEB 89	40th Army
ODMD	GEN-LT	MOROZOV, I. S.	FEB 87	Yazov
STVD	GEN	POPOV, N. I.	FEB 89	Afghan/Yazov
TUMD	GEN-LT	FUZHENKO, I. V.	FEB 89	GSFG
TCMD	GEN-LT	RODIONOV, I. N.	JUN 88	40th Army
NCMD	GEN-COL	SHUSTKO, L. S.	AUG 86	
FETVD	GEN	VOLOSHIN, I. M.	JUL 86 <sup>2</sup>	
BEMD	GEN-LT	NOVOZHILOV, V. I.	DEC 88	Yazov
SIMD	GEN-COL	P'YANKOV, B. YE.	MAR 87	GSFG
TBMD	GEN-COL	SEMEONOV, V. M.	OCT 88	
CAMD	GEN-COL	KOVTUNOV, A. V.	FEB 87 <sup>3</sup>	
LEMD	GEN-COL	YERMAKOV, V. F.	NOV 87	40th Army
MOMD	GEN-COL	KALININ, N. V.	FEB 89	GSFG/Yazov
URMD	GEN-LT	MAKASHOV, A. M.	FEB 89	GSFG
VOMD	GEN-COL	PATRIKEYEV, V. A.	OCT 85	Yazov

<sup>1</sup>GEN is abbreviation for General of the Army (four star).

<sup>2</sup>Voloshin has probably been replaced by March 1989.

<sup>3</sup>By March 1989 Kovtunov had departed CAMD; possibly either he or Shuralev (formerly of BEMD) replaced Voloshin.

ABBREVIATIONS

BAMD	Baltic Military District
BEMD	Belorussian Military District
C <sup>2</sup>	Command and Control
CAMD	Central Asian Military District
CINC	Commander in Chief
CGF	Central Group of Forces
CP	Command Post
CPMD	Carpathian Military District
EPW	Enemy prisoner of war
FEMD	Far Eastern Military District
FETVD	Far Eastern Theater of Military Operations
GEN	General, or General of the Army, 4-stars
GEN-COL	General-Colonel, 3 stars
GEN-LT	General-Lieutenant, 2 stars
GEN-MAJ	General-Major, 1 star
GOF	Group(s) of Forces
GSFG	Group of Soviet Forces, Germany
HCF	High Command of Forces
HRS	Hours
KIMD	Kiev Military District
KM	Kilometer(s)
LEMD	Leningrad Military District
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MD	Military District(s)
MOMD	Moscow Military District
MRD	Motor Rifle Division
MRR	Motor Rifle Regiment
MSU	Marshal of the Soviet Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCMD	North Caucasus Military District
NGF	Northern Group of Forces
ODMD	Odessa Military District
OMG	Operational Maneuver Group
SGF	Southern Group of Forces
SIMD	Siberian Military District
STVD	Southern Theater of Military Operations
SWTVD	Southwestern Theater of Military Operations
TBMD	Transbaykal Military District
TCMD	Transcaucasus Military District
TUMD	Turkestan Military District
TVD	Theater of Military Operations
URMD	Ural Military District
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VIZh	<u>Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal</u>
VOMD	Volga Military District
WTVD	Western Theater of Military Operations

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>J. F. C. Fuller, Generalship: Its Diseases and their Cure (Harrisburg, Pa.: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Field Manual 100-5, Operations (Washington, D.C. HQ Department of the Army, 1986), p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>L. D. Holder, "Catching Up With Operational Art," Introduction to Operational Art (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, USACGSC, AY 88-89), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Otto P. Chaney, Zhukov (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>R. Ruslanov, "Marshal Zhukov (part two)," Russian Review 15 (July 1956) : 190.

<sup>7</sup>Chaney, pp. 54-5.

<sup>8</sup>Seweryn Bialer, ed., Stalin and His Generals (New York: Pegasus, 1969), p. 298.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 606.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 422.

<sup>11</sup>R. Rokossovskiy, A Soldier's Duty (Moscow: Progress Press, 1970), p. 186.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 234 and Bialer, pp. 460-61.

<sup>14</sup>P. I. Batov, "Aktivnost' v oborone, reshitel'nost' v nastuplenii" [Activity in Defense and Decisiveness in the Offensive], Voyenno-istoricheskiy zhurnal [henceforth VIZh] (April 1985) : 83.

<sup>15</sup>Bialer, p. 327.

<sup>16</sup>Rokossovskiy, p. 203.

<sup>17</sup>Ivan Konev, "The Berlin Operation," in V. Sevruk, ed., How Wars End (Moscow: Progress Press, 1976), p. 31.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-5.

<sup>19</sup>Ivan Konev, Year of Victory (Moscow: Progress Press, 1969), p. 41.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>21</sup>The Headquarters commanding the Ground Forces, which had been disbanded in 1964, was reinstated in 1967.

<sup>22</sup>Some of Ogarkov's major works are: Always in Readiness to Defend the Fatherland (Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1982); History Teaches Vigilance, (Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1985); and "In Guard of Peaceful Labor," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil 10 (July 1981) : 80-91.

<sup>23</sup>N. Ogarkov, Always in Readiness to Defend the Fatherland, pp. 33-34.

<sup>24</sup>Gregory C. Baird, "The Soviet Theater Command: An Update," Naval War College Review 34 (Nov-Dec 1981) : 90-93.

<sup>25</sup>There are multiple sources for this information. Two of the best are: Guenter Lippert, "The GSFG--Four Decades of Soviet Troops in Germany," Soldat und Technik (November 1986). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-EER-87-033) and Soviet Military Power (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981-88).

<sup>26</sup>The number of MD command changes have generally increased in response to crises in the USSR or on its borders: 1953--death of Stalin; 1956-8--invasion of Hungary and attempt to oust Khrushchev; 1968-69--invasion of Czechoslovakia and border clashes with China; 1979-80--Poland and Afghanistan. These peaks have frequently coincided with Ground Force reorganizations, as well.

<sup>27</sup>All three had previously commanded an army, which by Soviet definition is an operational level organization. However, a Soviet army is comparable to a U.S. corps, which in U.S. terminology is usually considered a tactical command.

<sup>28</sup>In 1984 there were 11 MD/GOF command changes; this was the most in any one calendar year since the end of the Second World War.

<sup>29</sup>Turkestan and Central Asian Military Districts provided support to the Soviet contingent in Afghanistan. Senior officers assigned to these MDs have fared well since 1980.

<sup>30</sup>Director of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency. Directory of Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Officials (March 1989 Supplement).

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Soviet Military Power, 1988, p. 74 and conversations with Christopher Donnelly of the Soviet Studies Research Centre, Camberley, England and John Erickson of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

<sup>33</sup>Citation from Krasnaya zvezda, 3 October 1967 cited in Petr Kruzhin, "Mikhail Zaitsev Appointed Commander of the Belorussian Military District," Radio Liberty Research RL 379/76 (9 August 1976), p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Benjamin Schemmer, "US Unveils Multi-Source Evidence of New Soviet Threats in German Forum," Armed Forces Journal International (August 1984) : 51.

<sup>35</sup>The missile firing tanks are the T-64B and the T-80.

<sup>36</sup>James P. Mault, "Biographic Sketch--General Mikhail M. Zaytsev," Unpublished paper for HQ USAREUR, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup>Russell Watson, John Barry, et al., "Lessons of Afghanistan," Newsweek (20 February 1989) : 26.

<sup>38</sup>It is not certain that Zaytsev retired. However, after reviewing the recent appointments in the Soviet Defense Ministry, there are no positions vacant to which Zaytsev could have been assigned after leaving the STVD. Most likely he joined the Main Inspectorate Group. This is a body of senior officers who have left active service. Their function is to review selected policies, to write memoirs and military histories, and to preside at public events, anniversaries, and dedications. Although the Soviets do not consider members of this Group to be "on pension," they are by US definition retired.

<sup>39</sup>The four divisions are: 25th Tank Division; and the 7th, 12th and 32nd Guards Tank Divisions. "Tank Unit Withdrawals Revealed," Jane's Defense Weekly 11 (18 March 1989) : 472.

<sup>40</sup>Snetkov, like Zaytsev, will probably join the Main Inspectorate.

<sup>41</sup>In 1986, GEN Belikov was a surprise selectee to command GSFG. He, too, had served in the North Caucasus while Gorbachev was still in Stavropol.

\*2 Arch Sher and Richard Oden, "Exercise Zapad-81," Review of the Soviet Ground Forces DDB-1100-362-82 (April 1982) : 1.  
\*3 Ibid., p. 7.

\*4 Stanislav Postnikov, "Razvitiye sovetskogo voyennogo iskusstva v Kurskoy bitve" [The Development of Soviet Military Art in the Battle of Kursk], VIZh (July 1988) : 10-18.

\*5 Sergei Belitsky, "New Commander of Leningrad Military District," Radio Liberty Research RL 98/88 (8 March 1988) : 1.

\*6 Richard Woff, "Colonel General V. F. Ermakov - Commander Leningrad Military District," Unpublished paper from Soviet Studies Research Centre, Camberley England, January 1988, p. 2

\*7 Mikhail Zaytsev, "They Are Not Born Commanders," Voyenny vestnik (February 1976). Translated by HQDA OACSI (# K-6270, 4 May 1976) : 23.

\*8 Zaytsev, "Creativity in Tactics," Krasnaya zvezda (16 March 1982), p. 2. Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS 80947) : 8.

\*9 Zaytsev, "The Organization of Air Defense--An Important Task of the Combined-Arms Commander," Voyenny vestnik (February 1979). Translated by U.S. Army Foreign Science and Technology Center (FSTC-HT-529-79) : 53.

\*10 Boris Snetkov, "Offensive Operations by Soviet Forces on the Karelian Isthmus and in Southern Karelia," VIZh (December 1984). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-UMA-85-032) : 16.

\*11 Snetkov, "Za ob'ektivnost' otsenki" [For an Objective Estimate], Tyl vooruzhennykh sil (January 1988) : 26.

\*12 Ibid., p. 27.

\*13 Postnikov, "Kursk," p. 15.

\*14 Zaytsev, "The Tested Principle of Troop Training," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil 2 (January 1984). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-UMA-84-018) : 16.

\*15 Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Afghan Chronology: Another Brutal Year of Conflict," Armed Forces 6 (April

1987) : 156-160.

56 Postnikov, "Kursk," p. 11.

57 Vladimir Osipov, "With the Force of Authority," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil 17 (Sept 85). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS- UMA-86-004) : 29-36.

58 Osipov, "Invincible and Legendary," Pod znamenem Leninizma 2 (January 1985). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-UMA-85-038) : 31.

59 Snetkov, "Karelia," p. 15.

60 Snetkov, "Guarding Peace," Leningradskaya pravda (23 February 1983). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-83783) : 9.

61 Zaytsev, "The Homeland Entrusted Us With a Special Posting," Sovetskiy voyn 11 (June 1982). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-81507) : 18.

62 Osipov, "Invincible and Legendary," pp. 33 & 35.

63 Anatoliy Betekhtin, "The Commander--'Sole Commander' and Strengthening Discipline," Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil 17 (September 1986). Translated by Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS-UMA-87-006) : 2.

64 I have spoken with several American officers who have observed Warsaw Pact exercises. Each of them commented that vehicles of the non-Soviet armies generally appeared better maintained and the lifestyle of the East European soldiers seemed of higher quality than that of the Soviet troops. If the differences are that noticeable to part-time observers, then it certainly must be apparent to the officers and men of the Warsaw Pact.

65 GEN Petrov retired to the General Inspectorate from his post as First Deputy Minister of Defense in 1986, and GEN-COL Konchits is currently Commandant of the Frunze Academy. In the late 1970s, GEN Petrov advised the Ethiopian Army during its war with Somalia, and Konchits was reported to have served in Cuba in the early 1980s. Such assignments to advise Third World armies are not normally given to prominent mainstream senior officers.

66 Zaytsev, "The Tested Principle," p. 15.

67 Ibid., p. 13.

ssZaytsev, "They Are Not Born Commanders," pp. 25-6.

ssViktor Yermakov, "It Will Not Accept Routine,"  
Krasnaya zvezda (19 February 1986). Translated by Joint  
Publications Research Service (JPRS-86-025) : 28.

70GEN Gromov took command of the Kiev MD in February 1989 directly from commanding the 40th Army in Afghanistan. GEN-COL Moiseyev and GEN-LT Novozhilov both took command of the Far East MD, which has 21 divisions, without first having acquired experience by commanding a smaller district first.

71GEN-COL Nikolai Kalinin, the current commander of the Moscow MD, is an exception. He is an expert on airborne operations, having commanded the Soviet Airborne Forces from 1987-89. Yet he is a ground forces officer, having been First Deputy CINC of GSFG (1985-6) and Commander of the Siberian MD (1986-?).

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